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ART. IX. — *The Workman and the Franchise. Chapters from English History on the Representation and Education of the People.* By FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M. A. London and New York: Alexander Strahan. 1866. 8vo. pp. 244.

THE representation and education of the people, and what relations the House of Commons have borne in the past to the English people, are the questions which Mr. Maurice ponders in these lectures. No one could be better qualified for such a study, so far as sympathy with his subject and the heartiest devotion to the labor of regenerating the English working classes can avail. But Mr. Maurice is too much the clergyman, too little the scientific historian, to make his work of much value to any one who is not ready to accept his opinions from confidence in the excellence of his heart.

To decide *a priori* between political creeds, — to estimate the moral soundness of a watchword, party-cry, or political theory by the tests of sentiment, — this is to take part in history, to throw the weight of one's personal influence into the one or the other scale, but it is not to weigh history. However broadly philanthropic and disinterested our motives may be, we cannot thus gain an insight of those real causes, grand utilities, inevitable necessities, which the actors of history feel rather than understand, and which only the perspective of history can disclose to scientific analysis.

Writers like Mr. Maurice deal only with the external phenomena and the proximate causes of historical events, with the reasons which were calculated to stimulate or control zeal and heated passions, with the maxims which have served to concentrate the attention of confused understandings, and with the personal characters of historical agents. The causes which produced these, or gave them historical prominence, lie deeply obscured in the most difficult of the subjects with which scientific methods will have to deal in real history.

The survey which Mr. Maurice gives us of English political history, while it is too rapid and sketchy to present the dramatic interests of this grand movement, is too much in the style of ordinary histories to give us any clear ideas of the causes that

determined it. The principal thesis of the lectures is, that the word "people" has always meant in English politics, not the "fragments" which Caius Martius, in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* sends to their homes, not the mere multitude, which has nothing but numbers, but the "organized" classes. Organization is, according to Mr. Maurice, the basis of the representation which has hitherto prevailed in the English political system. Manhood, it is true, is indirectly the ground of the right of representation, but it is not manhood displayed in the units. Individuals have a right to a voice in the government only as they and their fellows have the virtue, power, and manhood to organize themselves, and to become conscious of their true interests as a class. Mr. Maurice, therefore, so far as he favors the further extension of the suffrage at all, would limit it, not to classes arbitrarily determined by property qualifications, but to spontaneous organizations representing real interests, or to co-operative societies. The success of the English volunteer militia movement suggests to him the kind of organization to which he would be willing to extend the suffrage.

There is much significance in the general doctrine which Mr. Maurice sets forth, but not much, we think, in his special interpretations and application of it. Organization is a rather vague term. In one sense, no human society is unorganized. "Man is more political than any bee or ant." He is the political animal. What Mr. Maurice calls the "fragments" of society, the multitude which he thinks most dangerous to civil order, would, were they really unorganized, be in the aggregate the most inefficient of bodies. Each member, bent on his own individual aims, unconscious of co-operation, would be only one of the disorderly with whom the police have to deal. *Divide et impera* would be the method of dealing with them.

But such is not the character of the multitude from which the state has to guard itself, either by skilful legislation or by force. It is only so far as the multitude *is* organized, that it becomes at all formidable. This multitude has so often appeared in European politics to great disadvantage, has so often been the dupe of knaves or fools, that great folly and moral baseness have got to be associated with it. Mr. Maurice as-

cribes these qualities to the majority. He exclaims against conforming to the will of a majority, "So help me God, I do not mean to follow the will of a majority; I hope never to follow it, always to set it at naught." In the light of American politics we judge this character of baseness to be erroneously imputed to the majority as such. Not only the many who in England feel their unity and common cause in their misfortunes or wrongs, but any class of society, the lords, the knights of the shire, and the burgesses of the town, when similarly placed, have also exhibited folly and brutality, and have violated the public order to overthrow oppression or opposition. Why then has immorality been affixed to the multitude as an essential and permanent quality? It is because the many have nowhere, except in America, ever been allowed in an organized capacity to display any other traits. As a preacher, Mr. Maurice is, of course, predisposed to divide the world into good and bad, and classify mankind on ethical principles; and on no other ground can we account for his horror of a majority. He appears to think it impossible for the majority ever to be right and the minority wrong, else he would not have committed himself to a rule which in practice might easily involve him in the greatest immorality.

With such sentimentality is naturally associated an opposition to utilitarian ideas of morality; and, accordingly, our author goes on to say, "And for that expression about the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number.' I do not understand it. I have no measure of it. I cannot tell what happiness is, or how it is to be distributed among the greatest number, or how the greatest number is to be ascertained." If Mr. Maurice *could* do all this, if he could understand and measure and discover all that this maxim demands, he would surpass all the prophets and lawgivers whose instructions have blessed mankind. But it is obvious that he does not understand how the maxim is meant to be applied, for he adds, "If it could be put to the vote of the greatest number what they would have for happiness, I have no security that they would not decide for something profoundly low and swinish." This method of ascertaining the greatest good is not implied in the utilitarian's maxim; nor, on the other hand, is it the object of

democratic governments to consult the majority as an oracle. The will of the majority and the good of the majority are confounded neither by the democrat nor by the utilitarian. Would Mr. Maurice contend that the will and judgment of a monarch are always right? Of course not; but would he deny then, that, imperfect as it is, the monarch's legal exercise of his will and judgment is the best policy for the state? Majorities are only the monarchs of democracies, not their prophets.

The course of politics in America has been, on the whole, so much smoother than in Europe, real grievances and imperfections of government so much sooner remedied, and measures of reform so much more thoroughly and promptly tried, that political theories have had less opportunity to gain the character of moral or religious causes by a rankling repression in the moral consciousness. Governmental institutions have, therefore, gained with us more and more the character of expediences. Our revolutionary maxims are not held with such worshipful zeal that we cannot see in the course of our history the solid grounds of utility which have been the real though unseen motives of our political career.

That the actual causes of historical events should be sought for, not merely in the reasons assigned for them by the agents through whom they are brought to pass, or in the political creed which is given in justification of them as political measures, but should also be sought for in the special conditions and necessities by which the political society of the time finds itself constrained, is a proposition so obviously evident, when stated, that we do not conceive it to stand in need of any proof. Communities, like individuals, act from many motives, but assign as the reasons of their actions such considerations as are calculated to give dignity and moral weight to them.

It is natural and proper that motives should stand in our practical philosophies in the order of their moral dignity, whatever may be the order of their practical efficiency. Active benevolence is justly claimed, for example, as the motive of a beneficent action, though this may have been dependent also on some less dignified motive, — on some selfish impulse of temporary convenience. If, therefore, in history we seek for political causes in the conveniences and expediences of society, as well

as in its declarations of political principles, it is because the efficient causes of its action are not always or exclusively moral.

The more prominent or moral motives of political action assume a utilitarian character or a sentimental one, according as the action is in pursuance of conservative or of revolutionary measures. Revolutionary ethics always appeal to moral sentiment, and in the announcement of first principles are likely to put out of sight or to subordinate unduly the occasions which bring these principles to notice and secure for them the requisite attention. The discovery or the first clear appreciation of a principle of action is much more likely to be regarded as an inspiration, than as an historical effect of social antecedents; since it is by its force as a sentiment that a principle is efficacious at times when its force as a rule of expediency depends on the logic of events.

It is therefore only when a policy is in the course of a peaceful and normal development in human affairs that its foundation in the actual necessities and conveniences of society becomes prominent, or even distinctly apparent. In the storm of revolutionary passions, morality takes refuge in those sentiments to which religious and revolutionary ethics have ascribed the validity of its precepts. Utility becomes a mean consideration, and is impotent against the violence of passion; but its maxims are secured, in the absence of calm reason, by the force of moral feeling. Hence it is that revolutions bequeath maxims and first principles clothed in wit and eloquence, rather than in rational discussions or scientific explanations of political measures. In later times, in pursuance of these measures, men come to regard them more and more in the light of expedients, and to refer their validity and the conditions of their application to those exigencies of society which were their real though unseen origin.

The principle of universal suffrage, and the more general doctrines that the governed have a right to a voice in the administration of public affairs, and that just governments only exist by the consent of the governed, are maxims for which utilitarian reasons exist, though they are often regarded as first principles, sanctioned by a sense of justice or by enlightened moral sentiment. But those who regard them as fundamental

truths see clearly that they have never attained to that dignity in the practical workings of our political institutions. Any limitations of these principles, save by equally fundamental considerations of justice or necessity, are properly regarded as offences, if they have in truth the character which revolutionary ethics claim for them. Those who hold that the right of suffrage rests immediately on a moral basis urge consistently that the suffrage should be extended, not only to all male citizens, but also to women, and to whoever in fact is morally and mentally competent to exercise the function; and these theorists also appeal consistently to the professions of political faith with which our history and political documents abound. But if we waive the reasons assigned by our Revolutionary statesmen, and interpret their wisdom by their acts in relation to the exigencies of their times, we shall find in these a sufficient justification of the existing extension of the suffrage, and reasons also for its further extension, with proper limitations, without the necessity of admitting the doctrine which would condemn our present short-comings as moral offences.

The non-existence of a governing class sufficiently self-conscious and united, and sufficiently powerful in its command of the moral and physical forces necessary to keep in subjection other classes of society, is the condition either of social anarchy, or else of the intervention of that enlightened, public-spirited good-sense and capacity for self-government which our forefathers showed in their Colonial history.

This capacity for self-government in every class of citizens, and a command of the last resort, the war power, by small communities in their militia organizations, which were first required for self-defence against hostile neighbors in the border life of new settlements, and, more than all, the fact that few representatives of the governing class were among the earlier settlers, and soon lost whatever prestige they may have brought from the mother country,—these facts were the conditions which made democracy a feasible scheme of government in America. But these conditions were compelled to assume a new aspect when the Colonies began their quarrel with the mother country. The possibility of such a form of government, or even its actual existence, was powerless against the

moral force of prescriptive rights and long-sanctioned usages, when fairly brought in conflict with them. These conditions required a moral force sufficiently powerful to cope with the sentiments of loyalty and respect for the past. The *right* of self-government in every class of citizens, and the *right* to use the war power which they actually possessed, and, above all, the rightful equality of all citizens before the law, had to be asserted, not merely as desirable political results, which the Colonists had substantially realized, but as morally binding principles, to which all mankind owed obedience. And this was a fair issue; for so long as conservatism and prescription rely on sentiment, so long must revolutionists be prophets. To "Thus saith the law," the only answer is, "Thus saith the Lord." The divine right of the people exists so long as the divine right of kings has any power in the world. The utilitarian grounds by which both rights might be justified under their proper conditions, and by the philosophical historian, were not inspiring considerations, and required calmer thought than passion permits.

The success of the Colonists in arms secured the conditions of the existence of democracy in America, which had come to be regarded, however, by the dominant party with the feelings that the Revolution engendered, that is, in the light of moral principles. The demonstrated capacity for self-government in the American people was interpreted as a right to self-government in all classes of mankind; but this principle was not consistently carried out, as we have said. What was really pursued were the two ends, to abolish a governing class proper, or one whose interests could be opposed permanently and systematically to the interests of the governed, and to incorporate into the body politic every possible class whose interest might be dangerously opposed to good order and the stability of the government. American politics sought to shun two opposite dangers, — dangers to the governed from the supremacy of any class, and dangers to the government by the exclusion of any class which might have sufficient unity, self-conscious power, and independent interest to attempt the same kind of revolution which the Colonists had themselves sanctioned, and which other American republics have repeated without end.

This was not indeed the view which successful democracy took of its new responsibilities. It did not profess to aim at strengthening a government inherently weak by conciliating all possible hostile classes and disaffected subjects with participation in the government, nor to prevent political power from falling into the hands of a class whose just right to govern could be denied only on the ground of its inability to govern justly. This would have been to confess weakness and distrust, which, though real and efficient motives, were not so worthy or inspiring as those of the new political ethics. The right of mankind to self-government, though practically signifying only the right of white male adults to hold office and take part in elections, was a broad, positive moral ground of action; and, so far as applied, tended to the same results as the inferior motives. As a moral principle it was doubtless essential to the success of the great experiment, and was a far truer doctrine than the equally sentimental conservatism which it defeated. But the inferior motives were satisfied with the limits to the extension of the suffrage which have actually obtained, and which are in direct conflict with the higher principle. Honest and uncompromising believers in this principle are justly scandalized at the inconsistent disfranchisement of women in all our States, and of negroes in most of them. It has been a sufficient consideration, however, in practical American politics, that women, though a natural class, could never become a political one with distinct interests to be defended, or with a possible ability to defend them for themselves. Nay, it has hitherto been a sufficient consideration with the greater number of the United States, that the negro, though standing in urgent need of protection from the cupidity and prejudice of the white citizen, was unable to help himself or injure the state.

But while our people have thus disregarded the integrity of the maxims of their political creed, have they therefore acted wholly from selfish motives, and without reference to moral ends? Or is it not true, rather, that their faith in this creed has never been so entire and uncompromising as some political orators would have us believe? The peaceful and normal pursuit of politics tends, as we have said, to give to principles of

action more and more the character of rules of expediency ; but it does not necessarily convert them into maxims of a narrow, short-sighted, or selfish expediency. Utilitarianism has its unselfish principles as well as sentimental ethics. The distinction is, that these principles are not rules or commandments or maxims of conduct. They are rather the objects which rules subserve and by which a maxim must be justified. The greatest good to the greatest number, or the greatest sum of human happiness, or by whatever phrase we seek to generalize these ends, are not rules of conduct, but tests of rules : they are not sources of moral maxims, but criterions of them. But utilitarianism does not forego the sanctions of moral sentiment. It removes the sanction from the rule or commandment to the reasons for them ; and these reasons are not the more general principles from which practical maxims may be deduced, but are the ends, in various forms of human excellence, for the accomplishment of which the rule must be contrived, and with reference to which it may be altered or disregarded. In considering how far rules may thus be dealt with consistently with a sound morality, a source of great confusion in the discussions of moral philosophy should be noticed. This is in the fact that one of the greatest of human excellences is in the *having* rules of conduct, and in pursuing them steadfastly ; this being the essential condition of the realization of any higher good. The twofold error has been committed by those who distrust the utilitarian spirit, of attributing to it an omission or denial of this excellence, and of assuming, in opposition to it, that morality consists essentially in what is only a condition of its realization, namely, in conscientiousness or fidelity to principles. Fidelity to bad principles makes one a "man of principle," no less than fidelity to good ones. This fidelity is not a source of enlightenment, but at best is only a condition of receiving enlightenment, and fidelity is the better condition in proportion as the ends which rules subserve are made its objects, rather than the rules themselves.

American politics have not ceased to aim at the benefit of mankind and the greatest good of the greatest number, however lamely these ends may have been pursued, and in spite of our want of faith in the political creed of the last century.

This creed is indeed a thing of the past, beyond recall, but with it political morality has not perished. This survives under a new and more enlightened form. The right to have a *good* government, and to secure to the machinery of government all the conditions necessary to this end, takes the place of the asserted fundamental right of *self-government*, except so far as this is seen to be one of these conditions. The value of self-government, when possible, is more truly appreciated now than ever before, since it is prized for what it is worth; namely, for that degree of good sense, public spirit, and self-restraint in any people which makes self-government possible, and thus makes it a means of educating the people to higher degrees of these good qualities.

It is upon such considerations as these that the question of the suffrage ought to be discussed, for it is upon such grounds that it must be decided.

ART. X.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, and of the principal Philosophical Questions discussed in his Writings.* By JOHN STUART MILL. Boston: William V. Spencer. 1865. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 330 and 354.

THE value of this most searching examination of Sir William Hamilton's writings, and its enduring interest as a contribution to philosophy, separating it widely from the short-lived publications of the season, are sufficient apologies for calling our readers' attention to it at this late day. In one respect, indeed, the work is a very timely publication, and in this it exhibits a literary skill of no ordinary merit. The position and present reputation both of the author and his subject are such, that the mere announcement of the work was sufficient to inspire with the liveliest curiosity every student of philosophy.

The writings of Sir William Hamilton have been so long published, that they have had a fair chance to gain a hearing, and to gain such prepossession of thinking minds, that their critic was sure of an intelligent and deeply interested attention, if not of an unprejudiced one; and his criticisms are the more effective, since they are not obliged to inform the